

CHARLES E. PETERSON, F.A.I.A.

Architectural Historian, Restorationist and Planner

September 3, 1980

George L. Collins, Director
Henry George School of Social Science
413 South 10th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Re: Background on 413 S. 10th

Dear Mr. Collins:

Friday I spent an hour in the HSP and learned a little more about the circumstances in which No. 413 was built and financed. All of this will, I hope, help us to understand how the house looked when HG was born on the Second Floor, front.

Alexander Napier, who seems to have bought the ground rent during Harlan's occupancy, was a stone cutter who was soon to die while living on Centre Square. Charles Johnson was a grocer who became an ink manufacturer. He lived at the northwest corner of Tenth and Lombard and owned other properties scattered about the neighborhood. He was probably a developer on the side. It looks as if he built "Jefferson's Row" which fronted the entire block south of Lombard between 9th and 10th in 1838 (see Palmer map).

After looking at Mr. Jhin's chain of title I see that James Lyndall, the house carpenter who built Nos. 409 and 411 S. Tenth Street, was sold out by the Philadelphia Sheriff in 1823 when his houses were yet unfinished. The "consortium" of builders I dreamed up may be coming true.

Please let me know how your board reacted to our first historical-architectural effort. In the meantime, I enclose a bill for my services, August 16-31 inclusive.

Regards,

Charles E. Peterson
Consultant

CEP:hg
Encl.

cc: Mr. Biddle
Mr. J. Collins

September 3, 1980

George Vaux, Esq.
320 Eaversham Road
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010

Re: Vaux's Court

Dear George:

The City moves faster than the Suburbs.

Saturday afternoon I ran into Michael K. Jhin, Associate Hospital Director (TDU), who owns the little house at 914 Waverly Street. He kindly gave me a 1964 chain of title that shows that Roberts Vaux bought his property at a Sheriff's Sale in 1823 when Nos. 409 and 411 South Tenth Street were still unfinished and held them until his death (1849?) when he willed them to members of his family.

If you have the records, they would recite the expenses of completing the house that shares a party wall with the Henry George Birthplace.

Regards,

Charles E. Peterson

CEP:hg

cc: Mr. G. Collins
Mr. Biddle ✓
Mr. J. Collins

September 3, 1980

BY HAND

Mr. Michael K. Jhin
914 Waverly Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147

Dear Mr. Jhin:

Enclosed are some prints of the Hexamer & Locher 1858 map of your neighborhood which I hope you will find interesting.

I am delighted to have from you Porter's chain of title for the houses on the south side of Lyndall's or Vaux's Court.

There is something poetic about "the short and simple annals of the poor". But the Annals of the Bankrupt make better reading and the Sheriff's sales in your vicinity will tell us something. I have already pointed out that 413 South Tenth Street in the late 18th century lay between a potter's field, the poor house and the insane asylum. It also is on made ground over a double stream that partly flowed down the middle of Tenth Street. Sounds like an early poverty frontier in Urban Philadelphia.

Regards,

Charles E. Peterson
Consultant to
Henry George Birthplace

CEP:hg

Encl.

cc: Mr. G. Collins
Mr. Biddle ✓
Mr. J. Collins